



**SUSTAINABLE
COFFEE
CHALLENGE**

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POCKET GUIDE

IMPROVING LABOR PRACTICES + SUPPLY



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Introduction

Coffee depends on workers to maintain coffee fields, pick the ripe cherries, process them into green coffee and roast and package them.

Within the coffee production system we have a number of worker types: Full-Time, Part-Time, Temporary, Multi-Party, and Ambiguous or Disguised Employment. Each of these is further defined below.

Coffee also has a number of different labor supply systems. These can vary from informal family labor and farmer or community labor exchange systems to more formal employment of full-time, part time, and temporary workers. These workers might be employed directly or via labor brokers. The majority of labor is hired for the harvest period when the coffee is picked from the trees.

Good labor practices should be the norm for each of these categories of workers and throughout the coffee supply chain, but we continue to confront forced labor, human trafficking and child labor in coffee.

Do we really understand what these terms mean? We need to in order to begin discussions and to better detect these issues in coffee production.

This short guidance document provides an overview of these terms and other key labor terms for the coffee sector and guides users through a process of considering and addressing risks.



PEOPLE NEED COFFEE TO THRIVE, AND COFFEE NEEDS PEOPLE AND NATURE TO THRIVE

TYPES OF LABOR



TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT

Workers are engaged for a specific period of time, includes fixed-term, project or task-based contracts, as well as seasonal or casual work.



MULTI-PARTY EMPLOYMENT

Workers are not directly employed by the company to which they provide their services.



PART-TIME + ON-CALL WORK

An employed person whose normal hours of work are fewer than those of comparable full-time workers (fewer than 35 hours, or 30 hours, per week).



DISGUISED EMPLOYMENT/ DEPENDENT SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Employment instance where respective rights and obligations of the parties concerned are not clear, or when inadequacies or gaps exist in the legislation.

CHILD LABOR IN COFFEE

Introduction

Reports and photos of children carrying heavy sacks of coffee during the harvest season persist in the sector. No government or company wants to find these conditions. To prevent these, we need to first understand what constitutes ‘child labor’. And to understand under what conditions it is acceptable to have children working on coffee farms.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is the global authority on labor conditions. It establishes global norms via a number of conventions that governments ratify and coffee certification and verification standards reference. In addition to the ILO conventions, governments often have additional protections that take the form of prohibited tasks that may be specific to sectors.

This section provides an overview of some of the common terms used to describe child work and child labor and the conditions to look for when discussing labor practices within coffee production.

What is Child Labor?

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), child labor is any work that “deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development.” One of the key concerns with regard to child labor is that it can interfere with their ability to attend and perform well at school. More specifically it states that work should not interfere with children’s schooling by:

- depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;

- obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
- requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

The ILO conventions also protect children from work that is “mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful”

The ILO convention says that the minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, and in most cases the worker should not be younger than 15 years of age. For developing countries, which include most coffee producing countries, the minimum age can be as low as 14 years of age.

The conventions do allow for children between the ages of 12 and 14 in developing countries to do “light work” as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training.

In coffee, many programs refer to the ‘worst forms of child labor’. When this phrase is used it refers to the following conditions as defined by Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182:

- (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

LABOR: MAKING SENSE OF THE EXISTING WORK

	Name	Purpose	Scale/ Geography
Tools	Improving supply chain transparency, monitoring and accountability in Guatemala’s coffee sector	Grievance Mechanism	Guatemala
	Responsible sourcing tool	Risk Assessment	Global
	Fair hiring toolkit	Best Practice Guide	Global
	Forced labor priority principles	Principles	Global
	Commodity mapping tool	Risk Assessment	Global

	Name	Purpose	Scale/ Geography
Reports/ Studies	Farmworker Protections and Labor Conditions in Brazil’s Coffee Sector	Country Assessment	Brazil
	Fairtrade coffee farmer income assessment	Income Benchmark	Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, India, Indonesia, & Vietnam
	Understanding the situation of workers in corporate and family coffee farms	Country Assessment	Colombia, Nicaragua
	A Blueprint for farmworker inclusion	Guidance on Key Issues	Global
	Global living wage coalition	Income Benchmark	Global (?)

	Name	Purpose	Scale/ Geography
Projects	Aquadas Farmworkers Pilot	Project Intervention	Colombia
	La Revancha	Project Intervention	Nicaragua

IDENTIFYING + ADDRESSING POTENTIAL LABOR SUPPLY CHAIN RISKS

- 1. Identify Risk:** Which origins present the greatest risk of labor issues?
- 2. Dive Deeper in Risky Origins:** Are there critical issues in my supply chain?
- 3. Identify and Undertake Corrective Action:** Are the suppliers willing to undertake corrective actions?
- 4. Assess opportunities to address issue at scale:** How pervasive is the issue in the region? Are my peers willing to collaborate to address the issue at scale? Is there a national action plan that I can support?



(c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;

(d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (Hazardous Child Labor).

Hazardous child labor is any work that is likely to jeopardize children’s physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals should not be done by anyone under the age of 18. This usually entails prohibitions on the application of pesticides, use of sharp tools and lifting heavy loads.

Sources: https://www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/2009/programmes/2015-fairtrade-child-forced-labor-guidelines.pdf

<http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm>



FORCED LABOR IN COFFEE

Introduction

Forced labor often conjures images of slavery and human trafficking. Yet it can also include other means that employers use to force people into work. It can appear in various forms that range from human trafficking to retaining personal documentation or implementing practices that cause workers to become indebted to corporate-owned stores. Each of these restricts the ability of the workers to move freely and/or to discontinue their employment.

Unfortunately there continue to be reports of forced labor in coffee. This is unacceptable and presents tremendous risks to stakeholders throughout the coffee value chain.

This brief provides an overview of global definitions of forced labor based on ILO conventions to help raise awareness of the issue and how to better detect and address it by pointing out some practices that are known to present risks.

What is Forced Labor?

In its most legal form, forced, or compulsory labor refers to “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily”.

This definition is concerned about forced labor in all types of employment, both formal and informal and the penalties employers use to compel the person to work.

Forced labor is in direct contrast to work that is offered voluntarily in which the

worker has given his or her free and informed consent to accept a job and has the ability to end the employment at any time.

How is Forced Labor Detected in Coffee?

Forced labor is very difficult to detect, but there are certain practices in coffee that are known to be good indicators of its potential. When these indicators are detected, efforts should be made to investigate them by engaging directly with suppliers.

Specific indicators that can serve as red flags for forced labor include the following:

Labor brokers + recruitment fees:

Some farms use labor brokers to source temporary workers during the harvest season. Some labor brokers may charge workers recruitment fees that result in high indebtedness and bondage. The use of labor brokers also results in less transparency of labor practices on the farm.

Document Retention: Farm managers may hold identification papers (e.g. government issued ID) on behalf of the workers and refuse to give them back to the workers upon request.

Indebtedness to the farm or to a company store: Workers may be forced to purchase goods at a company store that extends credit, which can result in indebtedness that renders their work involuntary.

Source: <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm>

a country fits within. This table takes an inclusive approach and counts policies and strategies as action plans as long as they made reference to forced labor/ human trafficking and/or child labor. These plans are not specific to coffee, but we believe this information can help start the dialogue with local actors to ask questions, learn more and find opportunities to work together to eradicate these practices from the coffee sector.

Countries with NAP for Forced Labor Only	Countries without National Action Plans
Bolivia	Central African Republic
Fiji	Dominica
Guinea	Equatorial Guinea
Guyana	Laos
Haiti	Mayanmar
Jamaica	Samoa
Malaysia	Sao Tome and Principe
Mexico	Suriname
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Tonga
Sierra Leone	Venezuela
Sri Lanka	Yemen
	Zambia

NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON FORCED AND CHILD LABOR

Some coffee producing countries have developed and are implementing national action plans to address forced and child labor concerns. It is important to understand where these exist as there may be opportunities to leverage them and form partnerships with the government to enhance their enforcement in the coffee sector.

While these policies are important they do not signify that there are no forced or child labor risks in coffee production within that country. It is important to understand

the effectiveness of these policies and their level of implementation. If they are not effectively implemented, there may be opportunities to work with local stakeholders to strengthen existing programs.

The following table categorizes coffee producing countries according to whether they have national action plans in place for forced and/or child labor. In many cases the policies and strategies in place to address the issues are not referred to as 'National Action Plans' which makes it difficult to clearly demarcate which category

Countries with NAP for Child and Forced Labor		Countries with NAP for Child Labor Only	
Brazil	Madagascar	Angola	Kenya
Burundi	Nepal	Belize	Malawi
China	Nigeria	Benin	Mozambique
Colombia	Panama	Cambodia	Nicaragua
Comoros	Papua New Guinea	Cameroon	Thailand
Costa Rica	Paraguay	Congo	Timor-Leste
Côte d'Ivoire	Peru	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Togo
Cuba	Philippines	Dominican Republic	Trinidad and Tobago
Ecuador	Rwanda	El Salvador	United Republic of Tanzania
Ethiopia	Uganda	Gabon	
Honduras	Vanuatu	Ghana	
Indonesia	Vietnam	Guatemala	
Liberia	Zimbabwe	India	



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